



SUDAN DIVESTMENT

TASK FORCE

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PRESS RELEASE

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MASSACHUSETTS JOINT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE UNANIMOUSLY PASSES SUDAN DIVESTMENT LEGISLATION

Massachusetts Seeks to Join Nationwide Divestment Movement

Senate Bill 1474 would require state pension funds to divest assets from companies facilitating genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan

Boston, MA— The Massachusetts Joint Committee on Public Service unanimously passed Senate Bill 1474 today, a targeted divestment bill which will divest Massachusetts's pension funds from companies that support the genocidal government of Sudan. Declared "genocide" by the US government, the atrocities in Sudan's Darfur region have already claimed over 400,000 lives and displaced more than 2.5 million people.

"I want to thank the committee for its courageous and unanimous vote. I believe we are now on course for Massachusetts to divest from Sudan," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "Massachusetts has always been a beacon of freedom and human rights to the world. By moving to divest our holdings in companies that do business with the brutal regime in Sudan, we will do our part to speed the ending of this horrific genocide."

Actress Mia Farrow was among those who testified in favor of divestment at the bill's hearing on March 29th, which was attended by over 250 concerned citizens and activists. "In keeping with its history, Massachusetts has once again demonstrated moral leadership," Farrow said. "Divestment is an important and effective measure towards bringing about an end to the suffering of Darfur's people."

"Every so often, an issue comes along that demands clear and courageous action in the face of unspeakable horrors. There can be no denying the brutal facts of the genocide in Darfur or of the Sudanese government's direct involvement in that genocide," said Public Service Chairman Jay Kaufman. "Our pension system and public service retirees must be part of the global opposition to this genocide. While saddened by the need to take the unusual step of ordering the state's retirement system to divest, I am proud to be part of this noble and necessary step."

"I applaud Chairman Kaufman and the members of the Committee for acting so swiftly on this legislation. The crisis in Sudan is an international concern, but we can, and must, act locally to make a difference in support of the people of Darfur. This is a terrific first step in demonstrating our opposition to the ongoing genocide," said Senator Harriette Chandler.

"By divesting, we would help send the message to the Sudanese government that the world will not sit silently on the sidelines while these horrific and unspeakable atrocities are carried out in Darfur," said Senator Ed Augustus. "I'm pleased to see that this positive first step was taken and I look forward to advancing this bill in the Senate."

With Colorado passing a similar bill today, Massachusetts seeks to become the eleventh state to divest from Sudan. The bill now heads to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Sixteen other states are currently considering targeted divestment legislation this session.

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